

Testimony Re: Biennium Budget FY 2018-2019 for DEEP/State Parks Conservation and Development Hearing  
2/17/17

Testimony from Holly Camerota, Waterford, Connecticut  
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Governor Malloy released the FY 2018-2019 CT State Budget and in his official statement committed to "Keeping Connecticut's beautiful state parks open and available to all."

I write to state once again my dismay about the proposed cuts to staffing and budgeting for our STATE PARKS!

As a member of the volunteer group Friends of Harkness, which has worked tirelessly over the past years to provide the free labor, love, and funds to restore the gardens, Eolia mansion and the grounds by fundraising, plant sales, mansion tours and more, I beg the Governor and all responsible for the health and beauty and ECONOMY of our state and its people to NOT DECIMATE the budgets to our state parks!

The budget for tourism has already been slashed to nothing. Now our state parks?

Why is there ALWAYS support for sports stadiums, casinos and lotteries? Where does all the lottery money go? The shares of casino winnings? What about QUALITY OF LIFE and the safety of our natural environment?

It is obvious that we cannot sustain a Park System that services 8-9 million visitors annually with reduced staffing levels foreseen with retirements and eliminating positions and leaving the work to a tired, demoralized staff.

It is also obvious that we must stabilize the long term Park System budget both by raising new revenue and by retaining collected park fees as was past practice.

Please reconsider and find the ways and means to support our State Parks!

Sincerely,

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